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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 008505

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2010

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: IS MASASU DEAD OR ALIVE?

REF: KINSHASA 7411

CLASSIFIED BY POLOFF JONATHAN PRATT FOR REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

[11.](#) (U) SUMMARY: EVER SINCE "COMMANDANT" ANSELME MASASU'S ARREST OCTOBER 31, THERE HAS BEEN CONSTANT SPECULATION AS TO HIS HEALTH AND WHEREABOUTS. THE RUMOR MILL PEAKED RECENTLY WHEN THE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO "ASADHO" PUBLISHED A REPORT ALLEGING THAT MASASU, ALONG WITH FAC FOLLOWERS FROM THE KIVUS, HAD BEEN TRIED, SENTENCED TO DEATH, AND EXECUTED NEAR PWETO IN KATANGA. FOR ITS PART, THE GDRC CLAIMS THAT MASASU IS ALIVE AND AWAITING TRIAL. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (U) FOLLOWING HIS ARREST OCTOBER 31 FOR ALLEGEDLY PLOTTING A COUP AGAINST PRESIDENT KABILA (REFTEL), MASASU SPENT AT LEAST THREE WEEKS IN UNDISCLOSED GDRC DETENTION CENTERS. HUMAN RIGHTS NGO ASADHO RECENTLY PUBLISHED A REPORT ALLEGING THAT MASASU WAS DEAD. THE REPORT, PUBLISHED IN EUROPE AND DIFFICULT TO TRACK DOWN IN KINSHASA, CLAIMS THAT THE GOVERNMENT FLEW MASASU AND HIS FAC COLLABORATORS TO LUBUMBASHI AND ON TO PWETO THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 21-22. THE REPORT FURTHER CLAIMS THAT THE FAC EXECUTED MASASU AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE 24TH OF NOVEMBER, AND ALLEGES THAT HUNDREDS OF OTHER FAC SOLDIERS, ALL FROM THE KIVUS AND SUSPECTED OF COLLABORATING WITH MASASU, HAVE BEEN EXECUTED HERE IN KINSHASA.

[13.](#) (C) JEAN MARIE RUSIMBUKA OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE IN KINSHASA ADDED SOME DETAIL TO THE STORY BASED ON HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH MASASU'S CONTACTS IN KINSHASA AND BRAZZAVILLE. THESE CONTACTS CLAIM THAT MASASU WAS SPOTTED, BOUND, AT THE LUBUMBASHI AIRPORT AT 3 A.M. ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 22ND. ONE CONTACT OF RUSIMBUKA'S, REPORTEDLY A CLOSE COLLEAGUE OF MASASU'S KNOWN AS COMMANDANT BORA KAMWANYA, CLAIMS THAT THE FAC TOOK MASASU TO A MILITARY CAMP TWENTY FIVE KILOMETERS OUTSIDE OF PWETO. ACCORDING TO RUSIMBUKA'S CONTACTS, A MILITARY COURT JUDGE KNOWN AS COMMANDANT ALAMBA DECLARED MASASU GUILTY OF TREASON ON NOVEMBER 23 AND CONDEMNED HIM TO DEATH ALONG WITH 35 ALLEGED MASASU FOLLOWERS. THIS STORY PARALLELS THE ASADHO REPORT IN CLAIMING THAT THE FAC EXECUTED MASASU AND THE KIVUSIAN SOLDIERS ON NOVEMBER 24TH.

[14.](#) (U) THE FAC GENERAL HEADQUARTERS BROADCAST A PRESS RELEASE DECEMBER 16 CLAIMING THAT THE ASADHO REPORT WAS FALSE AND THAT MASASU WAS ALIVE AND AWAITING TRIAL. HOWEVER, THE FAC HAS NOT ALLOWED ANYONE TO SEE MASASU.

[15.](#) (C) COMMENT: THE ASADHO REPORT HAS PUT PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE MASASU'S BODY, DEAD OR ALIVE. HOWEVER, AS THE GOVERNMENT IS APPARENTLY CONVINCED THAT MASASU WAS PLOTTING A COUP, AND IS EAGER TO CRACK DOWN ON PERCEIVED COLLABORATORS, NO ONE HERE IN KINSHASA HAS MADE MUCH NOISE ABOUT THE CASE. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY SILENT ON THE MATTER, PRESUMABLY DUE TO THEIR PERCEPTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL RESPOND HARSHLY IF THEY GIVE THE STORY TOO MUCH ATTENTION.

[16.](#) (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: MEANWHILE, THE CIRCLE OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE MASASU CASE CONTINUES TO EXPAND. LAST WEEK HUMAN RIGHTS NGO ACTIVIST (AND FORMER EMBASSY IV PROGRAM PARTICIPANT) JEANINE MUKANIRWA WAS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED FOR HELPING AN ALLEGED MASASU ASSOCIATE CROSS THE RIVER TO BRAZZAVILLE. END COMMENT.  
SWING